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## Board Bulletin

### Board Bulletin: Here's to your health!

*By Oliver J. Bell, Chairman*

In our busy lives, it sometimes seems impossible to find time to do what it takes to stay healthy and fit. It's easier to pick up fast food at the end of a long day at work. When it comes time to exercise, we are tempted to relax and do nothing instead of going to the gym or taking a walk or run in our neighborhood. But by resisting those enticing temptations for the easy way out, you'll be a healthier, happier person.

At the start of a new year, many of us have the best intention of making a change. It's easy to say what you want to do, but when it comes down to it, it is hard for us to actually keep our intentions or resolutions. As we get started in 2014, remember these simple tips as you work toward a healthier and happier you:

- Be specific: Instead of saying you want to get healthy, or want to be fit, set your goals on more specifics. Make a plan to exercise four days a week, plan out your shopping list for healthier home-cooked meals, and write down your specific goals and review them often.
- Make it attainable: When the changes are unrealistic, then we are setting ourselves up for failure. Instead of focusing on losing 25 pounds, focus on the first five, and celebrate your success at each milestone.
- Track your progress: Document your progress from the beginning. When you see the positive results, it will encourage you to keep working hard.
- Get a partner: Having someone else to cheer you on, or someone that will help you stay focused, is extremely beneficial and you could also encourage your partner on their goals.
- Anticipate mistakes: When it seems that you are not making progress, don't give up. Most resolutions have some setbacks, and it will not be a perfect or smooth ride. You should continue to work hard at the tasks at hand to reach your goal.

As you work on keeping your New Year's resolution, keep these ideas in your thoughts



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to help you get started on or maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Incorporate proper eating habits into your lifestyle. Choose from the basic food groups which include vegeta-

bles, fruits, grains, dairy and protein foods to eat well-balanced meals. Reduce the intake of refined sugars like soft drinks, candy and other rich desserts. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables every day. Choose reduced-fat foods and low fat milk. These are just a few ways to help you in your pursuit of healthy eating habits.

Be careful with diets and weight loss programs. There are many fad diets that promise quick weight loss but most of these plans are recipes for failure. To lose weight, simply take in fewer calories than you burn. By choosing to eat sensibly from the basic food groups and eating fewer calories than you burn, you will lose weight. Don't starve yourself. Start off slowly and your chances of success will be greater.

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Exercise: You can always become more active, even if you have not exercised for a long time! According to the Mayo Clinic, among other things, exercise controls weight, combats health conditions and diseases, improves your mood, boosts energy and promotes better sleep. As with a weight loss plan, you should start slowly. Do not try to do too much too soon. Choose exercise that you enjoy and work your way up to the level of intensity that works for you. For some people, exercising with a friend is motivational and is also a good accountability tool.

TDCJ has a great program to help you in your mission! The Chairman's Fitness Challenge is designed to encourage all employees

to engage in physical fitness activities and encourage participation agency-wide. The 2014 Challenge is divided into four six-week challenges and provides an exercise equivalents chart with points for specific exercises.

For additional information on the challenge, please go to <http://tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/hr/win/info/challengepacket.pdf>.

Another program available to you is the annual Get Fit Texas State Agency Physical Activity Challenge, <https://www.getfittexas.org>, a program hosted by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) as part of their mission to improve health and well-being in Texas. The purpose of the event is to

encourage all employees of the state of Texas to become involved in any physical activity for at least 150 minutes per week. This website allows you to track your health and fitness progress all year long, at no cost, even if you do not enroll in the state agency challenge.

You work diligently every day to provide public safety in extremely difficult circumstances and, in so doing, sometimes may forget to take care of yourself. I want to encourage you to take time to get in shape and stay in shape! You will be physically and mentally healthier for your efforts. ●